

Editorial

ASUO leadership practical but flawed

The Lynn Pinckney administration is over and the Steve Nelson executive has begun its year in office. A few parting words are in order for Pinckney, a few welcoming words for Nelson.

The Pinckney administration was not boring. Whatever else student and administration opinion may be of her, it is widely conceded that she was an effective advocate for some of the issues she chose to address.

Although it took forever to get off the ground and still has limited ridership, the Saferide van must be counted Pinckney's single most important success.

Questions remain about the propriety of using incidental fees for a single-sex activity, but the van itself is exactly the sort of student-service project that student government ought to emphasize.

After years of talk and little significant action, Student Projects Inc. arose under the Pinckney administration to serve as the umbrella for such activities as Footnotes and the planned Common Market food store.

These too are practical projects with clear benefit to students.

Our disagreements with Pinckney's efforts in office had to do with her tendency to adopt the entire leftist agenda as a compendium of "student issues," and to spend time, energy and student money addressing national and international issues.

This is the primary criticism of Students for a Progressive Agenda, Pinckney's party.

Another problem is the notion that a proper role for government is to snuff opposing viewpoints and compel behavior according to the wishes of the SPA core group.

This is what Pinckney and company did with the Commentator and the ROTC, and to a lesser extent with the Emerald. We hope her successors take a more liberal view of the campus as a place where all ideas, even offensive ones, can see the light of day.

A University cannot tolerate intellectual absolutism, the notion that some ideas are inherently good and others bad. That is theology, not education. Some private religious colleges operate that way, but research universities cannot.

The SPA theology is antithetical to the concept of a university and to the idea of academic freedom. At a university, all truths must be held tentative, as former University President Bill Boyd was fond of saying.

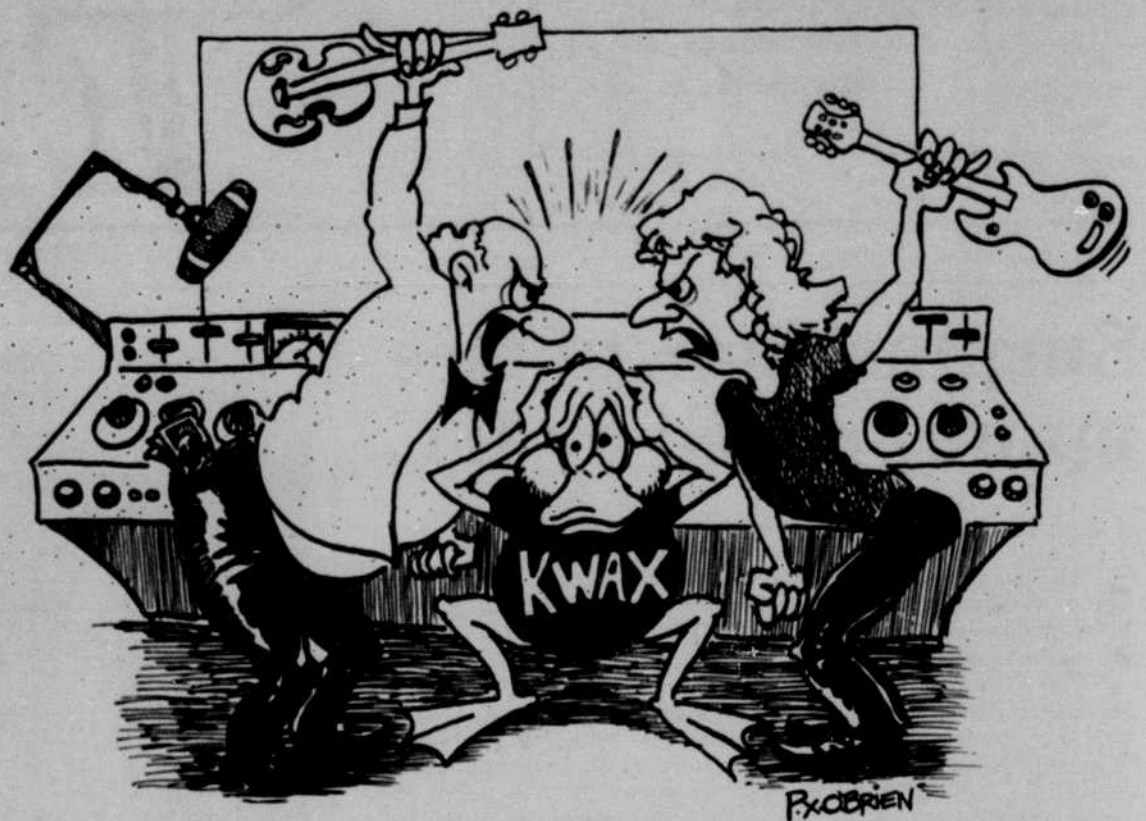
We welcome Steve Nelson, Caitlin Cameron and the new ASUO staff and elected officials to their term in office. Many were elected as SPA candidates, but we don't insist that they carry all the burdens of the past with them.

Likewise, they must prove themselves as leaders in their own right, as Lynn Pinckney did.

We admire Lynn's forthright manner, her willingness to continue communicating with doubters and opponents, her steadfast pursuit of what she thinks is right and her ability to keep student self-government in perspective relative to the rest of the world.

A new ASUO team is at the helm, and we will do our best to communicate both their accomplishments and mistakes to the audience that comprises much of our readership and all of their constituency: the students of the University of Oregon.

Always remember this constituency in its entirety, not just the few who vote. Produce practical results for all students and student government will serve its highest purpose.



Letters

Free country

As much as I've been exposed to the ingratitude of people living in this country, sometimes it still amazes me. In fact, this latest escapade during gay pride week with disruptions and neo-Nazi letters to the editor really disgusts me too.

People in this country, no matter how offbeat, have a right to express their opinions and present their ideas. We have the freedom to accept or reject their proposals. One would hardly know this from some of the crap published in the Emerald: "Faggots and dykes crawl back under your rock," "You're an embarrassment to society," etc. That interruption of their movie Thursday night was worthy of junior high school students.

Basically all these people were doing was attending lectures and watching movies, no one was required to be present if they didn't want to be. There was also a run and a dance and a rally and no one had to go to those either.

Shit, I'm thankful to be living in a country that presents so many viewpoints. It helps me to form my own. I don't need everyone to be white and heterosexual like me to feel secure about myself. I don't care if people are gay, it takes too much energy to hate someone for something like that. I'd sure

rather live here than someplace like Russia where they don't even tell their own people how much radiation they've been exposed to.

People need to pull their heads out of the toilet and remember why this country came to be 210 years ago.

Sue Simonitch
English

Editor switch

Reversing the decision to appoint Paul Sturtz editor of the Emerald smells. There appear to be many unanswered questions. Perhaps Michelle Brence is a better candidate by some standards. However, Michelle charged sexual discrimination by the Emerald Board. I hear no mention by Scott Diehl that the Board did indeed sexually discriminate.

Unless impropriety is demonstrated, why should a governing board reverse a decision that was made in good faith?

There are frequent instances of more qualified people who for various reasons do not always get promoted, get appointed department head or get appointed to other positions. Unfortunately, boards do have both the need and right to make decisions that aren't always perceived by some to be the best.

What does "the selection process was not adequate" mean? Does it mean that the Emerald Board made errors in judgment, discriminated, was influenced inappropriately by the independent committee or simply wanted to avoid a difficult

situation?

I think that Scott Diehl owes us a lot more explanation before we should accept this sudden switch if the original decision was indeed made in good faith.

G. Badovick
Business Administration

Quits in protest

As newly-appointed Community Editor of the Oregon Daily Emerald, I feel obligated to resign my position in protest of the mishandling of grievances concerning the selection of next year's editor.

It is clear that Paul Sturtz was not only sufficiently experienced in journalism to adequately hold the job, but that the ideas he offered for next year's Emerald were a major factor in his original hiring by the ODE Board. Thus charges of sex discrimination are an unfair distortion of the ideals of affirmative action.

It is by no means obvious that Michelle was "more qualified," whatever that may mean. What is apparent is that she followed a time-honored tradition of maneuvering within the Emerald staff to ensure her own selection to the editorship.

I would assert that the reason for Paul's loss of the top job stems from a pre-decision on the part of current Emerald leadership to force him out; this unethical disregard of the ODE Board's legitimate vote on the matter smacks of partisan political manipulation of an ambiguous grievance process.

Lisa Loving

Oregon Daily Emerald

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